

In this Issue



GSIG's conference updates and panels for 2020 (pgs. 2-7)

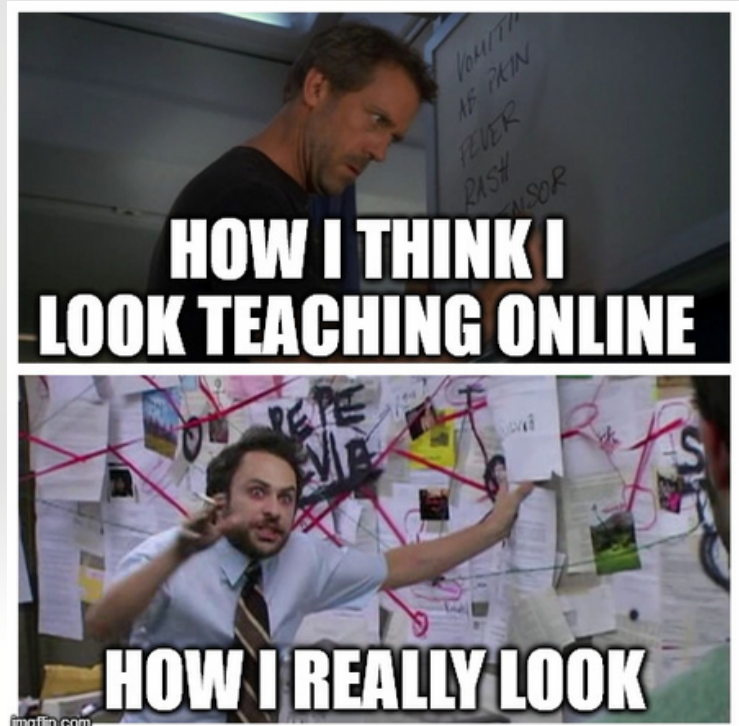
**GSIG Check-Ins (p. 8)
Staying Positive & productive: Tips from a dean and professors on managing the job search in the pandemic age (pgs. 9-16)**

New Faculty Congratulations (p. 17)

A community approach to research (p. 18-19)

Strategies for Remote Teaching and Pedagogy (pgs. 20-22)

GSIG Student Member Spotlight (pgs. 23-25)



Congratulations on completing the Spring 2020 semester! As you read about all the GSIG updates, join us on a virtual Scavenger Hunt of San Francisco. Flip through each page and see how many you can identify. Answer Key on the Last Page! If you get them all (Letters A-M), message us on Facebook. You get a shout out on our Facebook page!





WHY JOIN?

CHECK OUT WHAT GSIG HAS TO OFFER

Join the group that has been sharing resources and improving the quality of graduate education in journalism and mass communication since 1991.



Conference Papers

Submit your papers to our yearly open paper calls - the AEJMC MidWinter and National conferences.



Job Openings

Stay connected and informed with job opening updates and deadlines.



Pre-conference Session

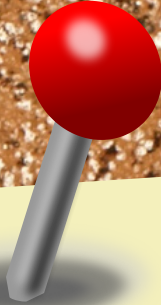
Attend the pre-conference session designed to help guide grad students from Ph.D. life to job hunting.

Expand Your Network

GSIG has members from several different universities working together. Meet, interact, and share ideas with other students and faculty across the country!

Website: <https://aejmc.us/gsig/>

Facebook: GSIG (AEJMC)



**Join the GSIG Exec Board
for a
Virtual Wine & Cheese Night
*Elections to follow (*Open to all)*
Saturday, August 8
6:30 to 8 p.m. (Pacific)**



B





**Wednesday,
August 5, 1-5pm
Pacific**



MAXIMIZE YOUR TIME AS A PH.D. STUDENT

REGISTER FOR THE PRE-CONFERENCE SESSION

Learn tips and tricks on getting the most out of your Ph.D. experience. From CVs to job searching to interviewing, listen to faculty and other students' experiences.



After Graduation

What comes after grad school? Learn how to prepare yourself for the job market.



Market Yourself

When is the last time you updated your CV? Hear tips on how to appeal to universities.



Interview Skills

How are phone and on-campus interviews different? Discuss the protocols for each.

Register for the pre-conference when signing up for the AEJMC National Conference. The registration fee is \$10.

AEJMC 2020 Panels

Take a look at the awesome conference panels GSIG has planned for this year.

Teaching Students Methods & Skills the Profession Needs

With Communication Theory and Methodology Division

Thursday, Aug. 6 from 5-6:30 PM Pacific

The overwhelming volume of information produced by and about human activity, in addition to the recent increase in digitally available data, tools, and processing power, are changing the communication landscape.

Professors and instructors desire to create classroom environments that facilitate intellectual curiosity and provide students with opportunities to gain hands-on experience that mirrors communication practice. However, a changing media environment has exposed the limited scope of tools, methods, and skills communication-related programs are prepared to teach their students. To address this deficit, this panel will discuss how to teach students methods and skills that employers increasingly desire from communication professionals. Such methods and skills might include computational methods, code literacy, data journalism, measurement and analytics, and web/social media management.

AEJMC 2020- Panels

Take a look at the awesome conference panels GSIG has planned for this year.

Finding Your Research Agenda

With Visual Communication Division

Friday, Aug. 7 from 11:45 AM-1:15 PM Pacific

Doctoral students and early career scholars are told they must have programmatic research agendas. Having a research agenda is a key aspect of defining ourselves as researchers, landing jobs, and eventually earning tenure and promotion. But how do early career scholars go about finding their niche? How can one contribute research to a specific area without repeating what has already been done or running out of new research ideas? What if you get bored of your original research interest? What if you desire to study a new topic? Panelists, including research deans, professors, and doctoral students with established research agendas, will discuss tips for building a research agenda, coming up with original, creative studies, finding collaborators with similar research areas, and seeking to become an expert on a specific topic or method you enjoy.

AEJMC 2020- Panels

Take a look at the awesome conference panels GSIG has planned for this year.

PF&R Panel: Creating a Welcoming and Inclusive Academic Environment

With the Small Programs Interest Group

Saturday, Aug. 8 from 1:15-2:45 PM

Higher education can be challenging for some students. It is particularly important for educators to create inclusive environments for students of color on campuses where they might be a minority, first generation students, students with disabilities, or students whose first language is not English. This panel will allow graduate students and scholars to share their unique experiences and advice concerning how to make sure all graduate students feel welcomed and appreciated at their universities. It will also discuss strategies for building dynamic out-of-class communication – a particularly important consideration as educators work to create welcoming and inclusive environments for all students.

GSIG Check-Ins

See what some of our AEJMC grad students and professors are doing to adjust to teaching and research this summer



UF Ph.D. Student and GSIG Research Chair Moritz Cleve finds new devices to promote free expression, diversity and inclusion while teaching from afar. Mo uses a Blue yeti microphone set up to make sure his online classes have the best sound quality. (Buy a similar one on Amazon for less than \$200 to improve your professional presence on Zoom.

Research looks a little different these days! Cen (April) Yue enjoys working in a hammock outdoors on the University of Florida campus.



University of Florida's Kalyca Becketl and Katy Hunt Robinson sure know that research in a pandemic is always better with a friend!

Dr. Katie Foss, Full Professor at Middle Tennessee State University is dressed as Maria von Trapp for a lesson on the Sound of Music. Anything goes in pandemic teaching!



***It was originally stated that Dr. Katie Foss was an assistant professor. She is a full professor and this version has been updated.**

Staying Positive & Productive: Tips from a University Dean on Managing the Job Search in the Coronavirus Age

Dr. David Perlmutter, Texas Tech University dean and current AEJMC president, answered questions from GSIG PR Chair, Rosalynn Vasquez, about his thoughts on how the current pandemic is affecting graduate education, mental health, and the job search.

The pandemic is disrupting our academic routines in many ways, from halting research projects to changing our teaching environments. How will students be able to succeed in academia?

Well, the first piece of important good news is that colleges and universities in America are working extremely hard to make sure that all of the events surrounding the COVID-19 crisis have the least possible effects on their faculty and staff. That is not going to happen equally or unequally everywhere, but the attempt is being made. That said, all these things are beyond the control of any individual and so it's important to focus on what you can do to make yourself the strongest possible candidate and try not to worry about the externals. I believe that next year there are going to be job searches, there is going to be hiring, universities will be moving forward with all accompanying employment processes, but we don't know whether it's going to be lower or much lower. It's just too early to tell.

Whatever you are doing right now, I would just keep on doing it. If you are aiming toward a position at a research university, I would try to find ways to continue your research in the new modalities that we have available – although it looks like quite a number of campuses will be opening up the research and teaching enterprise to more terrestrial options in the summer and the fall. Try to get done what you can.

The kind of things that maybe don't require a physical contact, and I know that is easier in some subject areas than others, but just keep on doing it. Same thing with teaching; your university probably has a lot of needs for you to help in the teaching enterprise and now is the time to make sure that you get to be teacher-of-record or a TA. Having something on your CV that you taught or supported teaching online/via digital modalities are going to be skill sets that people are going to be looking for. So if you can get some experiencing teaching a course online or serving as a TA on a course remotely, it will add to your attractiveness as a candidate in academia.



Do you think COVID-19 will force many of us in academia (including hiring committees) to rethink what success may look like?

Possibly. It is just so hard to say exactly what will be a long-term effect of this on careers and hiring. I do feel that the world has gotten yet another confirmation of the importance of effective communications. We tell our undergraduate students that one of the advantages of being a communications major is a lot of flexibility and adjustability. Our undergraduate students go to work for all sorts of companies, industries, nonprofits, and government agencies everywhere, and they aren't necessarily tied to any one sector of the economy or one kind of industry. For example, more than 50% of our undergraduate majors go to work for a non-media company. I think the same thing is true for those of you who might be pursuing careers in teaching. I don't see the need for communications classes diminishing. I don't see a drop in communications majors. In fact, if you look around there are some other majors that are going to be devastatingly impacted by many of the things that are going to be happening in the next couple of years. I can't see us being one of them. Actually, I am pretty optimistic that at least we will hold our own, if not keep expanding at the rate we have in the past.

What is your advice for students on the job market that are hoping to do the AEJMC job hub in August? How can they best prepare?

I would prepare like you've always prepared except that you know that now according to the announcement that we just made from AEJMC we are going to having a digital conference and so you are going to be interviewing remotely with probably some of the same people that you were going to be interviewing with in person. This is certainly the time to upgrade your digital/remote/online skills, making sure you are a master of Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Skype, Facebook Live, and any of the other video conference platforms.

Make sure that you have the best equipment access and technology in your home or wherever you are going to be interviewing from, maybe upgrading that microphone and rehearsing your presentation skills online, feeling comfortable with an online conversation. (One note: For between \$200-300 you can buy a small video light kit to illuminate yourself flatteringly in front of your computer, as an example).wrote an essay that mentions in passing some tips about remote interviewing. It was aimed at administrative positions, but some of the same advice will apply. [David D. Perlmutter. "Administration 101, Part 6: The First-Round Interview." Chronicle of Higher Education, July 21, 2017, pp. A29-30.]

Also, make sure your website or platforms where people can see what you've done are fully accessible and your digitized CV/dossier looks as sharp as possible. We are media and communication so people aren't going to forgive you if you have a bad-looking website or you are not able to give them the materials digitally. We expect the technological best from our new job candidates.



D

C

Should students be opening themselves to industry jobs or other types of temporary roles?

In my 27 years as a communications faculty member I have always seen about 1/3 to 1/4 of our students pursuing careers in industry, government agencies, and nonprofits. I always thought that was one of the big advantages of our major. You are not locked into either “academia or bust,” and there are many rewarding careers especially in research in association with nonprofits, or government, or companies, and the skillsets that you learn are going to be very useful in the years to come, whatever problems the planet is trying to address.

We also love professors who have had professional experience in the workplace outside of academia and that just adds to your CV if you want to come back into academia or enter academia later in your career. So, it’s not an either/or decision. Now, there are some challenges if you are pursuing the research professor route because of course we are looking for people who are able to publish high-quality research and if you take off too much time from that it would count against you. But generally, industry experience is a very good thing and a positive.

In terms of mental health, how can students stay positive through these periods of uncertainty and stress?

I am actually a little bit afraid because we have focused so much in the last month or so on the technical issues, making sure people have a hotspot or avoiding “Zoom bombing.” But mental health and morale and culture matter, too. This is very important and whatever habits you develop to keep yourself healthy mentally and physically, don’t give them up! Keep getting regular exercise; try to have as much safe social contact as possible; keep up with your relatives; do anything that makes you feel better as a person. And by all means take long breaks from the negative news – spend more time reading poetry, changing the oil in your car, and watching cat videos.

I always thought that was one of the big advantages of our major. You are not locked into either “academia or bust,” and there are many rewarding careers especially in research in association with nonprofits, or government, or companies, and the skillsets that you learn are going to be very useful in the years to come, whatever problems the planet is trying to address.



David D. Perlmutter is professor & dean at the College of Media & Communication at Texas Tech University, and the current president of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC). With more than 30 years in academia, Dr. Perlmutter has been described as a “household name among American professors” due to his contributions to the future of higher education as a researcher, administrator, and mentor. In particular he has written a regular advice column for The Chronicle of Higher Education for two decades and a book on promotion and tenure published by Harvard University Press. He can be reached at david.perlmutter@ttu.edu.



Staying Positive & Productive: Tips from an International Professor on Managing the Job Search in the Coronavirus Age

Dr. Kun Xu an Assistant Professor in Emerging Media at University of Florida, answered questions from GSIG Communications Chair Hayley Markovich, about his thoughts on how the current pandemic is affecting graduate education, mental health, and the job search, especially for international students.

The pandemic is disrupting our academic routines in many ways, from halting research projects to changing our teaching environments. How will students be able to succeed in academia?

My thoughts are that compared to other research methods, those who rely on lab experiments, face-to-face interviews, field studies may be affected the most. In that case, students may want to discuss with their advisors and make decisions on what the best strategy is to move forward with their research. For example, they may need to consider using online experiments or online interviews as alternative approaches in order to get research done or graduate as planned. If students have some flexibility regarding the graduation time, then they could try to prioritize the projects that require less on-site work for now and simultaneously get prepared for the new projects that can be launched when the campus is reopened.

In addition, no one has a crystal ball to predict what exactly will happen. I understand that studying at home can be very challenging to some students as there could be many distractions. But there are some tips students can try during their routine daily schedule. For example, some higher education experts have recommended getting dressed, or having study suits to take a more professional work status. Building in some social hours may also help relieve students' anxiety, or adjust students' moods.

Although the crisis a hard time to go through, it may also be an opportunity to reflect on research, accumulate new knowledge, and better prepare for the job market.

What is your advice for international students on the job market currently? What are some things you think they should do or consider to best prepare/respond to what is happening?

Time management is really important. First, International students should keep being informed of new policies or changes from International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS). Second, they should also pay attention to executive changes or government decisions regarding the processing of Optional Practical Training (OPT), work visa application, and green card application. Some procedures may take longer than before. In order to avoid any delays, it is advised that students work on retrospective calculation of all the important time points, and do the application as early as possible. They need to take into consideration what's the best timing to apply for OPT, defend dissertation, officially graduate, ask for H1B application, or begin to use OPT status. Considering that many schools may be freezing hires or cutting budget, students need to manage their expectations or be more open-minded. For example, if your goal is to secure a 2-2 teaching position, maybe you can also consider 2-3 or 3-3 teaching load positions during this pandemic time period. If international students are going into industry, then they also need to consider about the computer-generated random selection process for their H1B approval. Postdocs or other research-related jobs can be temporary options too.

Should students be opening themselves to industry jobs or other types of temporary roles?

It depends on students' career goals and their research interests. Industry jobs may also be experiencing a certain level of budget control. But keeping an eye on the industry job would not hurt. Many industry jobs are research-related. For example, tech companies (e.g., Amazon, Facebook) need people who work on data science or user experience research. Some financial companies would welcome those who have expertise on modeling techniques. Students may also consider postdoc positions. They can pay attention to those that fall in the general area of media and communication, and the ones that are offered under inter-disciplinary programs, consortiums, libraries, and research centers. Besides, if students do not mind exploring the job positions outside US, there are positions opening in areas that are less affected by the pandemic (e.g., some Asian countries and regions are recovering now).



Dr. Kun Xu is an Assistant Professor of Emerging Media at University of Florida. His research area focuses on the intersection of human-computer interaction, computer-mediated communication, and media psychology. He can be reached at kun.xu@ufl.edu.

In terms of mental health, how can students stay positive through these periods of uncertainty & stress?

The pandemic will be contained eventually. During this time, students may adopt diverse strategies to avoid mental issues. Most universities have programs or counseling centers that are accessible to students. Per my knowledge, although they may no longer be able to provide face-to-face counseling, they have provided the online alternatives that students can use. In addition, some students (esp. Asian students) may have experienced anxiety regarding racism on social media or even in real life. So for those who feel that they may need more online social support, they may want to increase the use of social media to communicate what they are experiencing with friends to relieve pressure and depression. For those who may have been suffering from information overload or misinformation on social media, then cutting the usage and directing your attention to some other activities (e.g., video games like Animal Crossing, or yoga) may help.



Disrupted Job Markets: Tips from a Professor Who Was on the Job Market During the 2008-2009 Economic Recession

Dr. Myiah Hutchens an Assistant Professor in Public Relations at University of Florida, answered questions from GSIG Communications Chair Hayley Markovich, about the disrupted academic job market. She shared advice from her own experiences job searching in disrupted academic job markets.

Tell us more about your experience on the job market during the 2008 recession. How did the recession affect job postings, etc.

I was on the market in the 2009-2010 academic year, so universities knew what was happening. Universities that had budget cuts and hiring freezes had been informed or at least had a sense of what was coming, which meant that there were fewer openings posted. Many universities weren't getting to rehire positions that were vacated because of someone moving or retiring. Some people didn't retire who might have otherwise retired. Previously we could scan the AEJ program to look for the "Congratulations, we hired X" ads, and be able to guess that wherever X moved from might now be hiring. After the recession, that was no longer the case. In combination with the fewer posted openings, you'd also see job ads with language saying the job was open "pending budgetary approval," which was their way of signaling they may not get to hire for the position. Friends of mine who were looking for their first jobs in 2008-2009 had it the worst because they would go on campus interviews just to be told after the fact that the university cut the line. My year there were jobs, but there were fewer jobs.

Using your experience from the recession job market, what is your advice for students on the job market currently? What are some things you think they should do or consider to best prepare/respond to what is happening?

First, don't freak out. This is not the end of the world and places will still hire. I can guarantee that the number of jobs out there will not be zero. Second, be honest with yourself about what is really, really important to you. Is it the type of university or is it the location? Do you have family considerations that you have to take into account? The answer cannot be all of the above are the most important. If the most important thing to you is to be at an R1 type of place, you need to apply to every R1 that you fit regardless of if it's in a location you like, ditto if your answer is you want to be at a small liberal arts college. If being in a specific region or size of community is the most important thing to you, you need to be willing to apply to a wider range of jobs within that region. It's good to have a long-term goal of being at an R1 university in California. However, this is not the year to only apply to R1 jobs in California. Third, remember you aren't making a lifelong commitment to that first job. You might be, and that's great, but it's OK to move. If your dream job isn't hiring, or you don't get the dream position, think about what you can do to give you the greatest chance of being able to land in that dream position later.



To provide a personal example, I'm a political communication scholar and really wanted to be at an R1 institution. The year I was ABD there was a grand total of three jobs posted in my research area, and they weren't even all at R1 institutions. I decided the highest teaching load I would accept would be a 3-3, because I wanted to make sure I could continue to prioritize my research. Within that 3-3 criteria, I applied to anything that I felt competent to teach – so anything strategic communication related, general mass comm, research methods, and those few pol com jobs. I got a job at an R1 in a region that would not have been my first choice and didn't specialize in my research area. While I'm no longer there, I am very thankful for the time I had in that position. That job allowed me to do the things that were most important to me, I made some great friends, and had great colleagues. I was able to keep doing research and working with graduate students, which allowed me to be competitive for other R1 jobs. I'm now at top 10 institution getting ready to teach undergraduate political communication in fall, which is an absolute dream job situation for me.

Do you have any advice for students who may be entering the job market in the next few years, since they may still be feeling the effects of the pandemic on the hiring process too?

My advice to those who are still a few years out is essentially the same as my advice for those graduating this year. The market is likely to be tight and more competitive than usual for a few years. ABDs won't just be competing against ABDs. Instead, ABDs will be competing against assistant professors who didn't end up in their desired situation – and there might be more of those than typical for the next few years.

Those couple of pol com jobs that I mentioned in my situation? I went on campus interviews for two of them, and in both cases the person who ended up with the job was someone who was currently an assistant professor elsewhere. But really, take a deep breath, think about what's important to you, and then put yourself in the best situation you can.

Should students be opening themselves to industry jobs or other types of temporary roles? What advice do you have for students who choose to go down this path, but still may aim to look for a research focused university job later?

I think if you are interested in industry positions, it absolutely doesn't hurt to look. It can definitely help in the long-run. The benefit of those jobs – or other temporary positions like visiting professors or post-docs, is they don't hire months and months before the position starts like the typical tenure-track academic position, so you'll be able to first test out the academic market before switching over to looking at industry positions. If you want to go to a teaching-focused position, I think doing something like that could make you an even more attractive hire in a few years as your industry skills will be fresh. Those industry skills are also valued by R1 institutions.



My caveat, if you want an R1 position, you really need to make sure that you don't end up with a research gap on your CV. You'll lose access to academic journals without an institutional affiliation, but you can still keep up with the research in your subfield by getting journal alerts and reading the paper abstracts. Use social media to follow the scholars in your area and then use the links that people post to the free full article (if they post a link to a free version). If you can't find a free version, email the authors and ask them if they'll send you a copy of their article if you find research that is especially relevant. It will take effort, but it will be important to stay current on the research in your area of interest. In addition, it is also imperative to keep publishing papers. Can you submit parts of your dissertation? Can you collaborate with your former classmates, your advisor, or people you've meet at conferences? Can you engage in scholarly research as part of your industry job, through writing case studies or something?

How can students stay positive through these periods of uncertainty & stress, especially since we all aim to have a university job post-graduation?

Be kind to yourself and remember your friends are your friends, not your competition. Yes, you might be applying to the same jobs as some of your friends, and it will sting sometimes hearing that they got a phone interview or a campus interview that you really wanted. But the field is small, and careers are long. Cheer for each other and support each other and celebrate every victory you can. Watch the job wiki if you can treat it as just another piece of information. However, if you find that you obsess over the wiki, then avoid looking at it. Please don't play the game of who is the most martyred with your friends. We all work hard, we all want fulfilling jobs, and we all are extra stressed right now. Take a deep breath and remember that at the end of the day, our jobs are pretty cool, and you have good shot of getting where you want to be in the long run.

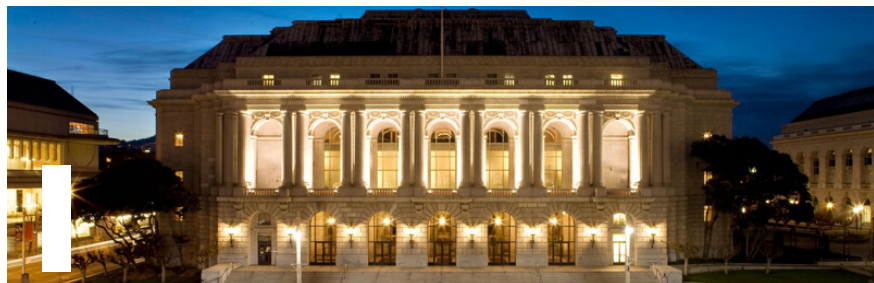
Dr. Myiah Hutchens is a political communication scholar whose research generally centers on how communication functions in democratic processes – that is, to help or hinder political processes. Her research generally focuses on what leads people to seek out diverse perspectives - particularly views they disagree with - and how individuals then process that disagreement. She can be reached at myiahhutchens@ufl.edu.



Congratulations!



GSIG would like to formally congratulate former GSIG Membership Chair, Dr. Kaitlin Bane Miller, on obtaining her Ph.D. from the University of Oregon! You can soon find Dr. Bane in her new role as a tenure-track Assistant Professor at the University of Alabama!



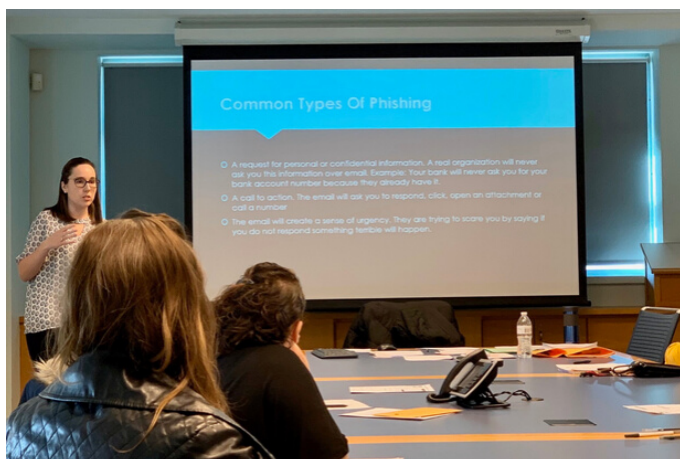
A Community Approach to Research

Research can take you down many tracks as a graduate student and within your academic career you will have the opportunity to involve yourself in a number of differing project types. However, one form of research that shouldn't be overlooked is that of participatory action research (PAR). PAR is defined by Payne and Bryant (2018) as a research methodology that “incorporates marginalized voices to more fairly guide analysis and activist based agendas” (p. 451). Kid and Kral (2005) summarize PAR as involving “understanding, mutual involvement, change, and a process that promotes personal growth” (p. 187). The methodology is probably most known for its focus on the active involvement of those from the community you are looking to partner with, a process of letting participants lead the way toward making their own systemic change via the research you are helping to conduct.

For University of Kansas doctoral student Darcey Altschwager, a research assistant for the Center of Digital Inclusion housed within the William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications, the process of participatory action research may not be as immediate or straightforward as other research methodologies, however, the journey for her is the best part.

The most fulfilling part is when participants come to me ecstatic to share an achievement of theirs. Achievements range from finding employment, finally using that digital device that has been collecting dust in their house for years, or applying what they have learned in our educational sessions to their daily lives”, said Altschwager.

In her role as a center researcher and in cooperation with Director, Dr. Hyunjin Seo, Darcey has assisted in conducting research activities and data gathering, forming relationships with community participants, coordinating projects among the research team, and in designing digital literacy courses. The Center's projects have ranged from working with minority senior citizens to the currently working with formerly incarcerated women as a part of an NSF-funded research/education program. The goal of the group is in mitigating the digital divide that disproportionately impacts marginalized populations. For graduate students looking to affect change within their communities and within a research framework, PAR holds much promise. However, states Altschwager, there are important considerations to think about before you begin.



“Develop strong relationships with community partners that work with the population you are interested in researching. Community partners are key to understanding best practices with targeted populations and most likely they will be more than willing to assist so their organization and their clients can benefit from your research”, said Altschwager.

Elliot (1991), and updated by Savin-Baden and Wimpenny (2007), outlines a process for PAR that sees the researcher begin by formulating a problem, or “the situation one wishes to change or improve upon” (p. 332). Secondly, researchers should explore the situation in greater detail: who is impacted by this issue and what are the critical items that need to be addressed? Third, start to formulate a research plan that addresses your overall main goal, the community factors you are hoping to change, the negotiations and conversations you will need to have with others in the community, the resources needed to conduct this work, and an understanding of the ethical framework for conducting your study. Importantly, even with a plan in hand states Altschwager, realize that this is only the beginning.

“Give yourself time and be empathic with your participants. Participatory action research takes a considerable amount of time to not only recruit your participants but also to conduct the intervention. You can prepare as much as possible but the reality is that things you did not anticipate will pop up that you will need to handle. When things get tough just remind yourself to take it one day at a time and why you are doing this research in the first place” said Altschwager. “The end result can change the way a community receives opportunities and support.”



Strategies for Remote Teaching and Pedagogy

GSIG generated a list of insightful teaching approaches and resources from eight institutions that are useful for online learning. The institutions were randomly selected from organizations represented at the 2019 AEJMC conference and statements have been synthesized to offer relevant strategies. The full statements can be found at the hyperlinks embedded in each bullet point. These recommendations were initiated during the online transitions made during COVID-19 but are undoubtedly beneficial strategies for instructors in the pandemic's aftermath. Note: NDSU's resource was obtained from a public Facebook post and the information was collected through student surveys distributed by multiple departments. The complete guide can be found at the DropBox link in the bullet point.



During times of high stress, students have a harder time focusing on their studies. Be considerate of making accommodations with your materials, such as media, documents, or broadcasts, by including alternative text, captions, or proper formatting. PowerPoint has an “accessibility checker” under the “File” tab. Replace scanned PDF images with an accessible copy from the library. Re-evaluate the attendance policies in the context of the disruption to your classes. Remember that all students may not have equal access to technology or other resources for the revised format of your classes. – University of Georgia

Several colleges at North Dakota State University collected survey responses from students regarding what faculty could do to help ease some of the challenges they are experiencing during the transition to online learning. The top five suggestions include:

1. Email a “To-Do” List of Tasks – everything students need to do that week – on Mondays.
2. Remind students of the best way to contact you and when they can expect a response.
3. Acknowledge the fear, uncertainty, and stress that we are all experiencing right now. Share strategies that can help people cope with these feelings.
4. Offer flexibility where you can.
5. Delete or reduce one thing each week.

For more insight on these strategies, go to the Dropbox. - Dr. Carrie Anne Platt, North Dakota State University



The University of California-Davis explains that it is important to be intentional with remote instruction. When students are asked to transition their learning from one course delivery format (face-to-face) to another (remote instruction), the cognitive load increases significantly. Students must learn or become proficient in using a learning management system and digital tools they may have limited experience with; they must learn the structures and processes a particular instructor has created to support remote learning; and they must learn the content of your course. This can be more cognitively demanding for students than face-to-face classes. Therefore, the more clearly and uniformly you structure your Canvas modules for your students, the more cognitive capacity they can devote to learning the course content. Thus, it is recommended that faculty adopt a uniform and simple design for each module. – [University of California, Davis](#)



If you're new to online teaching, or if you're teaching a large lecture-based class, you might be more comfortable pre-recording lectures rather than delivering live sessions. Rather than recording a full-length lecture in one sitting, consider splitting your class session into smaller chunks. This could make it easier for you to produce your recordings, and it also makes it easier for students to review specific sections of your lecture multiple times. Smaller "mini-lectures" are also good pedagogy. If you're teaching a small seminar-style class, teaching online live using Zoom might be a good fit. - [The University of Tennessee](#)

Hybrid educational models may be a part of our future. No matter the format, it is important that students have opportunities to interact with each other, with their teacher, and with the course content. For some programs, such as those serving learners unable to attend school in physical classrooms for various reasons, the pandemic-initiated move to virtual learning could be a welcome and permanent improvement. Future learning environments may blend asynchronous online elements, where students can go at their own pace, on their own time, have some choice over their learning and are set to engage deeply and critically with course content combined with synchronous elements. There is positive interdependence in cooperative learning and continuous formative feedback. It is suggested to be most successful for student learning. – Dr. Christine Greenhow, [Michigan State University](#)



A unique success of online instruction is randomized breakout rooms, which allow students to work in groups without forcing people to sit according to a seating chart. Students have been very engaged during group work. Putting students in random groups inevitably makes them pay closer attention to the lectures, and not just rely on their known neighbor to do the work for them. It is also a way for students to know more members of the class and expand their study support network. - Dr. David Orser, University of Minnesota



If you have experience with online teaching, reach out to your colleagues with help in embracing the world of digital instruction. Prof. Jason Porter developed a guide to "Streaming in a Hurry," which created and shared videos that both showed and explained how to livestream within his university's digital framework. His first piece of advice to colleagues was simple: You are not creating an online course in a week, he cautioned; you are simply making your regular classroom course accessible to digital users. - Prof. Jason Porter, University of South Carolina



Keep it simple – don't try anything new or complex if you don't have to. Don't try to be perfect – this is a significant challenge for everyone. Things will not go as planned. The technology may falter. Students may have access challenges. Things will happen. Do your best and that will be enough. Be honest, transparent and respectful – communicate with your students about the challenges. Let them know what you're trying to do and ask for help, from them, from us, from your colleagues. If you're teaching with a Pass/Fail option or continuing with letter grades, no matter what the decision is, focus on providing students with feedback on their performance so they can improve over time. - University of Maryland



UNIVERSITY OF
MARYLAND

GSIG Student Spotlight: Alex Olshansky, Texas Tech University

Meet Alex Olshansky, a second-year PhD student at Texas Tech University, and GSIG member. Alex spent some time talking with GSIG PR Chair Rosalynn Vasquez to discuss his research interests in misinformation and pseudoscience, including his work on the Flat Earth movement.

Q: Tell us about your current research regarding “science denial” phenomenon and how your Flat Earth study shed new light into the issue.

A: As one might imagine, it’s hard to find a better example of science denial than when people insist that Earth is flat. My research is finding that most flat earthers are not necessarily less science literate than the general population. In fact, they are often very science curious. However, flat Earthers are also conspiracy-minded and have high levels of distrust of authority and institutions. This means mistrust of science as practiced by scientific institutions. Flat Earthers claim to love science but mistrust mainstream science. They rely on individuals doing their own “science” and “experiments” rather than information coming from any mainstream institutions. The role of YouTube is also crucial, as it serves as an alternative source of information where one can find many different versions of mainstream narratives, including those that fit with and reinforce one’s own worldview. Mistrust of institutions (e.g., government, media, etc.) is of growing concern and the flat Earth phenomenon is a prime example of it.

Q: Tell us a little more about your professional background and how that led to pursuing a PhD.

A: My background is a bit different than most students in my program. I began working in the banking industry in 2004 and earned a bachelor’s degree in finance in 2006. Most recently, I was an assistant vice president of operations for a small bank in Dallas until I came to Texas Tech in 2017. A friend of mine from high school, Dr. Asheley Landrum, took notice of my interest in science based on my social media posts, and as a fellow science nerd, she reached out to me. I told her I was simply a lowly banker and only a huge fan of science, not a scientist. Fast forward to 2017, Dr. Landrum joined as a new assistant professor, and she asked me, “Hey, how’d you like to come get a PhD and do science communication with me at Tech? Oh, and they’ll pay your tuition.” After some soul searching and conversations with my family and friends, I decided this was an opportunity I shouldn’t pass up.

"Mistrust of institutions (e.g., government, media, etc.) is of growing concern and the flat Earth phenomenon is a prime example of it."



Q: How did your interest in science develop?

A: This is a deep question. I have to admit, I'm not one of those who had a love for science from a very early age. I remember being interested in space and dinosaurs when I was young, but that faded as I got older. It wasn't until after college that I really became interested in science. I think it's common as a young adult to contemplate existence and the nature of reality. There came a point where I became increasingly curious about how everything worked at a fundamental level.

I've been influenced by Carl Sagan and Christopher Hitchens, whose works pointed me in the direction of science as having the best answers for the nature of reality. During my spare time, I began watching video lectures on subjects ranging from physics to chemistry to evolutionary psychology. I took a deep dive into science, developed a love and a passion for it, and it has influenced my worldview ever since. Looking back, it may be because I come from a Jewish family and have observant Orthodoxy in my close family that my biggest fascination became the conflict between science and religion. This happens to be my prime area of research and helps explain why I focused on flat Earthers.

Q: What's the next research project you're working on?

A: I'm interested in how meta emotions such as awe or elevation influence peoples' perception of and adoption of disinformation. In my research on flat Earthers, I found that many of them feel that a flat Earth makes them feel important, as though it were created for them, and places them at the center of the universe. This feeling may be closer to a feeling of elevation or "feeling big," as opposed to the feeling of awe where one generally feels small. I'm interested in potentially measuring these emotions using psychophysiological tools and coupling that with self-reported measures of emotion, all while participants watch flat Earth YouTube videos. I'm curious if there's an association between emotion and willingness to consider and potentially adopt flat Earth views, or potentially other types of misinformation and conspiracy theories. This may be what I pursue for my dissertation.

"There came a point where I became increasingly curious about how everything worked at a fundamental level. I've been influenced by Carl Sagan and Christopher Hitchens, whose works pointed me in the direction of science as having the best answers for the nature of reality."



"I'm interested in how meta emotions such as awe or elevation influence peoples' perception of and adoption of disinformation. I'm curious if there's an association between emotion and willingness to consider and potentially adopt flat Earth views, or potentially other types of misinformation and conspiracy theories."

Q: What do you hope to pursue after you leave Texas Tech?

A: Like most PhD students in our program, I hope to get a tenure track job at a reputable R1 university with an excellent communications program.

Q: How has your involvement with GSIG and AEJMC helped you in your career development?

A: I am a new member of GSIG, so I'm looking forward to networking with other students and faculty. I'm planning to attend AEJMC for the first time this year to share my research and attend the job hub.

I am a new member of GSIG, so I'm looking forward to networking with other students and faculty.



Alex Olshansky is a second-year PhD student in the College of Media & Communication. He focuses on science communication, particularly examining misinformation, conspiracy theories and pseudoscience. He can be reached at alex.olshansky@ttu.edu.



SAN FRANCISCO SCAVENGER HUNT ANSWER KEY

A. GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE

"The Golden Gate Bridge is an iconic structure connecting the city of San Francisco to Marin County, California. It spans almost two miles across the Golden Gate, the narrow strait where San Francisco Bay opens to meet the Pacific Ocean. The dream of connecting San Francisco to its northern neighbors became a reality when construction commenced in 1933. Given the chance for steady employment amid the Great Depression, construction crews braved treacherous conditions as the roadway and towers took shape over open water. The Golden Gate Bridge, opened to the public in 1937, has endured as a picture-perfect landmark and an engineering marvel."

(Source: History.Com)

B. EDELMAN SAN FRANCISCO

One of the biggest public relations agencies, Edelman, has an office in San Francisco. The Graduate Student Interest Group had their sights set on a tour of the agency for this year's conference. Though that won't be happening, you can read the latest Edelman Trust Barometer (with COVID insights that may help inform your research) here: <https://www.edelman.com/research/trust-2020-spring-update>

C. THE FULL HOUSE HOUSE

Were you a fan of the Tanner family growing up? TV show's 'Full House' house is located in San Francisco. Since the show, the home has seen lots of renovations. See what it looks like inside today here: <https://www.today.com/home/full-house-home-sale-whole-new-look-t153761>

D. DISNEY FAMILY MUSEUM

Ever wanted to know about the life and legacy of Walt Disney? San Francisco is home of the Walt Disney Family Museum. Exhibitions include Walt Disney Studios and World War II, Mickey Mouse: From Walt to the World, and Masters of Animation, which showcases original drawings of Disney characters like Snow White and the seven dwarfs before they made it to the big screen.

E. GOLDEN GATE PARK'S JAPANESE TEA GARDEN

An affluent Japanese landscape designer named Makoto Hagiwara wished to transform the temporary World's Fair exhibit into a permanent fixture of the Golden Gate Park. Between 1895 and 1942, Hagiwara and his family resided, cared for, and furthered the development of the Japanese Tea Garden, until an unfortunate event occurred. World War II struck and the family was forced from their home and ushered off to concentration camps with other Japanese Americans. It remains today as an alluring attraction with an azalea-covered waterfall and sights of regal lanterns and statues. **Fact:** Makoto Hagiwara of Golden Gate Park's Japanese Tea Garden is credited as the inventor of the fortune cookie concept and the Tea Garden is the oldest public Japanese garden in the United States.

F. LOMBARD STREET

The crooked part of Lombard Street was designed in 1922 after it was determined that the 27% grade of the hill was too steep for most vehicles, and even pedestrians. The switchbacks were designed to increase the ability to travel safely on Lombard, the one-way street was paved with red bricks in its now-famously crooked fashion, and a recommended speed limit of 5 mph was established. **Fun fact:** Lombard isn't actually the most crooked street in the world – in fact, it's not even the most crooked street in San Francisco. It has become a popular attraction due to its stronger visual appeal and a more convenient location for visitors.

G. ALCATRAZ

About 1.5 miles off the shores of San Francisco is America's most infamous prison. Alcatraz is a 22-acre island hosting a federal prison that ran from 1934 to 1963. **Fun fact:** Lieutenant Juan Manuel de Ayala became the first known European to sail through the Golden Gate in 1775 and christened the rocky outcrop "La Isla de los Alcatraces," meaning "Island of the Pelicans."

H. GHIRARDELLI SQUARE

Consisting of unique shops and restaurants, as well as a small chocolate factory, Ghirardelli Square has been serving the world's best chocolate at their San Francisco location since 1964.

I. WAR MEMORIAL OPERA HOUSE

Built in 1932 as a memorial to World War I, the War Memorial Opera House hosts operas, symphonies, dinners, and other events and can hold over 3,000 audience members.

J. MIUR WOODS NATIONAL MONUMENT

Miur Woods National Monument is north of San Francisco. It is known for its towering redwood trees

K. FISHERMAN'S WHARF

Fisherman's Wharf is a bustling tourist area full of souvenir shops and restaurants serving clam chowder in sourdough bread bowls.

L. CABLE CAR MUSEUM

The Cable Car Museum is a free museum in San Francisco dedicated to the iconic form of transportation, the cable car.

M. COIT TOWER

Coit Tower is a 210-foot tower in the Telegraph Hill neighborhood of San Francisco, California, offering panoramic views over the city and the bay.